

House Bill 200

Good morning Mr. (Madam) Chairman, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you as a proponent of HB200. My name is Joan Sherman, my husband Russell Sherman and I are life-long residents of Ronan, MT.

Our daughter, Jami Sherman, was killed July 1, 2006 by a hit and run driver. Her body was drug underneath the car for 120 feet before the car stalled and came to a stop. The driver had to back up to get free of Jami's body. She was left dead on the road while the driver and two passengers fled the scene. They were apprehended 30 days later as a result of a tip to crime-stoppers.

The Lake County sheriff's department devoted between 2500 and 3000 hours to try to solve this hit and run case. This does not include the reserve officers' time or off-duty hours. This was a tremendous drain on manpower and resources.

The driver of the car had been released from the Montana State Prison 60 days prior. An adult female was riding in the front passenger seat of the car, while a teenage female was in the back seat. Both of these passengers were witness to the driver running Jami down from behind, but chose to keep silent after witnessing this horrendous crime. Neither passenger came forth with information about the running over and dragging death of our daughter, Jami.

When a driver flees the scene of an accident where someone is killed or severely injured, it is a felony. There is no law that says passengers who witness this type of felonious act are required to tell law enforcement the facts.

We will never know why they left Jami dead on the road.

We asked Representative Janna Taylor to present legislation to address passengers' accountability to come forth with information for hit and runs when a death or serious bodily injury has occurred.

Thank you